INFORMATION

AGENDA ITEM: CLSA System Reference

GENERAL OVERALL PROGRAM UPDATES:

CURRENT STATUS: The CLSA System Reference Program continues to support regional reference services in all 15 CLSA Cooperative Public Library Systems. Three major service components are required under the provisions of Code of California Regulations Section 20154. These service components are:

a) general improvement of local reference service;
b) improvement of reference service to the underserved; and
c) interlibrary reference.

For the interlibrary reference component the State Board has established statewide uniform performance objectives in Code of California Regulations Section 20157(b), as follows:

1. Answers shall be provided for 90% of all questions referred from member libraries.

2. 70% of answers shall be returned to the originating member library within 10 working days of the question having been transmitted by that library into the System's reference referral structure.

The setting of performance objectives is also required for the other two service components of the System Reference Program. However, these performance objectives are set individually by each System.

A policy adopted by the Board in August 1985 authorized the charging of System administrative indirect costs against the CLSA System Reference, Communications and Delivery and System Advisory Board Program allocations, whereby up to 25% of each service program baseline may be used for Planning, Coordination & Evaluation (PC&E). Exhibit A to this agenda item displays administrative expenditures for the three system-level programs.

Summary of 2001/02 System Annual Reports

Service Component: General Improvement of Local Reference Service

Exhibit B displays in summary form the performance objectives set by each System for this service component and the reported level of achievement of these

objectives. In general Systems provided assistance to member libraries in the following areas: staff training, reference materials development and purchase, evaluation of local reference services, and specialized resource identification and location. Overall the achievement of these individually set performance objectives is impressive.

Service Component: Improvement of Reference Service to the Underserved

Exhibit C displays the performance objectives set by each System for this service component and the reported achievement levels in summary form. This service component remains the most difficult of the three System Reference Program components for Systems to implement. In large part this difficulty reflects the challenges faced by human service agencies at all levels of government in attempting to identify the needs of underserved populations and to either adapt existing service delivery mechanisms or design new ones to fill those needs.

Nonetheless, an examination of the 2001/02 System Annual Reports reveals that considerable progress is being made to provide services to the underserved. While the objectives and target populations of the 15 Systems vary considerably, there continues to be an increased focus to the activities undertaken in many of the Systems.

Service Component: Interlibrary Reference

In 2001/02 all Systems were able to meet the performance objectives of answering 90% of the questions referred to the System level, and all Systems met the objective of answering 70% within 10 working days (see Exhibit D).

Expenditures: Exhibit E displays CLSA and local funds expended in support of the System Reference Program in 2001/02. Overall, 61% of the total budgeted for System Reference was expended from CLSA funds, and 39% was expended from local funds. See Exhibit F for a summary of local member contributions to the System-level programs.

TRANSITION PROCESS: Staff requests guidance from the Library of California Board in preparing a plan for the transition of this program and its funding to the Library of California for Board consideration, including when to stop requesting additional funds for the CLSA budget. The System Reference Program supports three separate components of reference service (general improvement of local reference, improvement of reference services to the underserved, and interlibrary reference). It appears that funding for the CLSA System Reference Program supports objectives included in the stated intent of the Information and Referral services (Reference) and Training and Continuing Education mandatory program elements of the Library of California. Although not a requirement, each Regional Library Network may apply to the LoC Board for funds to support underserved

programs on a region-wide basis. These program elements would be the most likely target areas for transitioning this particular CLSA program into the multitype network of the Library of California.

RELATED ISSUE TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD IN THE FUTURE: Review of the 2001/02 System Annual Report summaries may suggest areas for future program development.

Relevant Committee: Access Services
Staff Liaison: Sandy Habbestad

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